



# Module: Applying for Job Opportunities

This module equips youth with disabilities with the skills and resources to confidently navigate the job application and interview process. It covers how to research companies, tailor application materials, prepare for interviews, and handle each stage of the process – before, during, and after an interview.

# About CanWork BC

CanWork BC aims to make it easier for youth with disabilities ages to 15 to 30 years old to find and keep employment. There are a series of tools and resources for youth, employers, service providers, educators, and caregivers.

CanAssist at the University of Victoria, with the support of the BC Ministry of Social Development and Poverty Reduction, wrote the Provincial Employment Strategy for Youth with Disabilities (ESYD). This strategy informed the tools and resources.

## The Youth Tool

The CanWork BC youth tool is available as an interactive online platform at [portal.canworkbc.ca](https://portal.canworkbc.ca) and through PDF workbooks such as this one. There are five dimensions of content available.

For the full PDF workbook content and accompanying facilitator guides, as well as other CanWork BC tools and resources, go to [canworkbc.ca](https://canworkbc.ca).

# Introduction

This module has three sections to help you understand the job application process. You'll explore:

- Customizing your resume and cover letter for different roles.
- Collecting information about a company and creating questions to prepare for interviews.
- Practicing following up on applications, writing thank-you emails, responding to rejection, and accepting job offers.

Each section will take around 15-30 minutes to complete, and you're welcome to take breaks in between.

Each section has activities that connect employment essentials to your own life to make sure this is useful for you. Be prepared to think about and record your answers in whatever way works best. That could be writing your answers in this workbook or using a different format that works for you like voice recording or typing in a notes app.

At the end of the module, you'll have the chance to put what you've learned into practice with reflection questions. Let's get started!

# Section 1: Applying for Jobs

Exploring how to customize your resume and cover letter and knowing the best ways to apply for jobs can increase your chances of success.

## In this section, we'll cover:

- Customizing your resume and cover letter.
- Submitting job applications.

By the end of this section, you will have a better understanding of the importance of tailoring your job applications, some common methods of submitting job applications, and how these skills can help build your confidence during the job search.

## Engage and Explore

### Customizing Your Resume and Cover Letter

Let's get ready to apply for jobs with confidence! Customizing your resume and cover letter for each application is important because it shows employers that you fit their specific role.

If you don't feel confident creating a resume and cover letter yet review the *Creating a Job Search Toolkit* module of this dimension. If you have a good understanding of these documents, let's explore some tips below to customize them so they stand out for each job application.

## **1. Read the job description**

Start by reading the job description carefully to understand what the employer is looking for.

Pay attention to the important keywords used in the job description related to skills, qualifications, and responsibilities.

Pay special attention to specific requirements such as education and experience, as well as the order of responsibilities since the top ones are likely the most important to the employer.

## **2. Compare your resume**

Now that you understand what the employer wants, it's time to review your resume. Start by making a copy of your resume to keep the original safe.

In this copy, make sure to put your most important qualifications at the top, especially in the summary and experience sections. This will help the employer see that you have the skills and experiences they are looking for.

### **Tip**

If your most relevant experiences are from a while ago, think about using a functional or combination format. This

way, you can focus on your skills instead of just your job history.

- A **functional resume** focuses on your skills rather than your work history. Instead of listing jobs in order, it groups your experience by skills, like leadership or communication.
- A **combination resume** combines both skills and job history. It highlights key skills first, then lists your work experience in order from most recent to oldest.

### 3. Update your summary

Your resume summary is one of the first things hiring managers see, so make it count! Use it to highlight your most relevant skills and accomplishments, including the job title you're applying for.

*Example: "Self-motivated social media marketing specialist with more than three years of experience in web marketing and campaign management."*

### 4. Detail your work history

You don't need to include every job you have had if the experiences aren't relevant to the job you are applying for. Key words in the job description can help you know what to include.

If needed, shorten details about less relevant jobs or make separate sections for key work experience and other jobs. Use keywords from the job description in your bullet points to show you have the right skills.

Start with the most important tasks that match the job, especially if leadership is a focus.

## **5. Include measurable results**

Highlight your achievements with numbers to show your impact.

*Example: Instead of saying, "improved customer service," you could say, "reduced response time to customer inquiries by 10%." Providing measurable results helps show your contributions clearly.*

## **6. Update your skills section**

Add any relevant skills that your summary and work history might not include. It can be helpful to use keywords from the job description and list the most important skills first.

Include any "preferred" skills mentioned in the job posting, as they can help set you apart from other candidates.

## **7. Update your cover letter**

Just like your resume, customize your cover letter for each job application. Use it to explain how your skills and experiences

make you a good fit for the role. Refer to specific points from the job description or details from the company's website and connect them to your qualifications.

*Example: You could include a list of key skills noted in the job description with a short sentence describing how you have that skill.*

## **8. Review and proofread your resume and cover letter**

Finally, check both your resume and cover letter for spelling and grammar mistakes. Make sure you've used the employer's keywords throughout.

### **Tip**

Ask a friend or colleague to review them to ensure they align with the job description. This will help your application stand out to hiring managers.

## **Applying for Jobs**

Understanding the right way to apply whether online or in person can improve your chances of success. No matter which method you use, always follow the application instructions exactly as stated.

Here are some common methods and tips for each one.



- **Online applications**

When applying for a job, it's important to follow instructions and include all required documents, whether by email, a company website, or an online job board.

- **Email applications:** Make sure the subject line includes the job title and your name. Briefly introduce yourself, mention the position, and attach your cover letter and resume as a PDF document. Follow any specific instructions the employer provides, such as file formats or naming conventions.
- **Company websites:** Many companies have application portals where you'll fill out a form and upload your cover letter and resume. Different websites may have different requirements so be sure to check the job posting for instructions.
- **Job boards:** Platforms like Indeed or LinkedIn often require you to submit your documents through their system. Follow any specific steps in the job post to make sure you submit your application correctly.

- **In-person application**

Some smaller or local businesses still prefer receiving applications in person. This could happen at a job fair or by simply walking into a business and handing over your resume.

Applying in person allows you to make a personal connection with the employer, manager, or staff. This can help you stand out from those who apply online.

When visiting in person, dress professionally. What is appropriate to wear to work varies between jobs. You want to look clean and professional, so avoid wearing anything too casual for the job environment. For example, don't wear flip flops to apply for an office job or sweatpants to apply for a retail job. Be sure to bring a few printed copies of your resume with you and be ready to briefly explain why you're interested in the job.

## **Make it Personal**

### **Job Application Scenarios**

Now that you've learned different ways to apply for jobs and how to personalize your cover letter and resume for each position, let's apply this knowledge to real-life scenarios.

#### **Reflect on the Scenarios**

In this activity, you will explore three different scenarios related to applying for jobs. Read the scenario and think about what you would do. Then write down what you think would happen, based on the actions you think you would take. Write your answers below or in a notes app or another digital format that works for you. If you need help check out the example answers at the end of the section.

### Scenario 1

You find a job posting that sounds perfect, but you don't meet all the requirements listed, like a specific certification.

**Question:** What would you do?

**Question:** What do you think would happen?

## Scenario 2

You find two job postings that interest you: one is for a marketing coordinator at a tech company, and the other is for a project manager at a nonprofit organization.

**Question:** What would you do?

**Question:** What do you think would happen?

### **Scenario 3**

You find a job for a graphic designer that asks for a portfolio, but you don't have one ready.

**Question:** What would you do?

**Question:** What do you think would happen?

## Job Application Scenario Example Answers

### Scenario 1

- **What you could do:** Instead of ignoring the job, you decide to apply anyway. In your cover letter, you highlight your relevant experience and explain how you are actively working toward obtaining the certification.
- **What might happen:** Your proactive approach impresses the hiring manager, but whether they consider you depends on the employer and the industry. They like that you are eager to learn, but they might still choose someone who meets all the requirements. However, it's worth trying your chance!

### Scenario 2

- **What you could do:** You decide to customize your cover letter and resume for each job. For the marketing coordinator position, you focus on your experience with social media campaigns and analytics. For the project manager role, you highlight your leadership skills and successful project completions.
- **What might happen:** By tailoring your applications, you increase your chances of getting noticed. Each employer sees that you have the specific skills they need, which leads to interviews for both positions.

### Scenario 3

- **What you could do:** Instead of giving up, you choose to create a portfolio. You gather past projects, such as designs from school, freelance work, or personal projects. To make your application more relevant, you also create new graphics specifically for this job. For instance, if the company specializes in customized logos, you might design a few logos that highlight your style and skills.
- **What might happen:** By putting together a portfolio with your past work and new designs made for this job, you show your creativity and hard work. This helps you get noticed by employers and increases your chances of getting an interview.

## Section 2: Interviewing for Jobs

Interviews are a great chance to show your skills and personality. Knowing how to handle them is key to getting the job you want.

In this section, we'll explore how to prepare for an interview and what to focus on during the interview, including tips for effectively answering questions, asking your own, and staying calm.

### **In this section, we'll cover:**

- Preparing for an interview.
- Identifying what questions you want to ask the potential employer.
- Requesting accommodations to set you up for success in the interview.

By the end of this section, you will have a better understanding of why interviews are important, and how you can use them to see if the company culture is a good fit for you.

## Engage and Explore

### **Preparing for an Interview**

An interview is a meeting with an employer where they assess if you're a good fit for the job. It's also an opportunity for you to see if the company is a good fit for you. It's your chance to showcase your skills and personality while learning more about the job and workplace.



## Researching the Company

Before going into any interview, it's important to know who you'll be talking to and what the company is all about. Researching helps you feel more prepared and shows the interviewer that you're serious about the role. Here are some things to look into:

- **Understand the company:** Take time to research the company's mission, values, and work culture. This information will be on their company website, usually on the 'About Us' section. This gives you an idea of what they care about and if it matches your own values and goals. Showing that you're familiar with the company during the interview proves that you've prepared well and are interested in the opportunity.
- **Know the role:** Carefully read the job description to understand the specific responsibilities and expectations of the role. This will help you see how your skills and experience match what they're looking for. Knowing the key duties allows you to tailor your answers in the interview, showing that you're a great fit for the position.
- **Look into the interviewers:** A quick look at LinkedIn can help you learn about the interviewers' backgrounds, making the conversation feel more personal. **For example,** if you notice that one of them worked at a company you like or studied a similar subject, mention it during the interview. This shows that you're interested and engaged.

## Practicing Your Answers

Interviews often follow a similar structure, with some common questions. Preparing your answers ahead of time can help you feel more confident.

- **Practice answering common questions:** Be prepared to answer questions like “Tell me about yourself,” and “Why do you want this job?”
- **Make your answers relevant to the job:** Connect your skills and experiences to the specific position you’re applying for.
- **Use the STAR method:** STAR is an acronym for Situation, Task, Action, and Result. It’s a good way to structure your answers because it helps the employer see how your specific actions contributed to a task. For example, if an interviewer asks you to “Describe a time when you made a positive impact on your workplace,” you could use the STAR method. Learn more about the STAR method by exploring the table below.

<b>Star</b>	Describe the situation or challenge you faced. Be specific but keep it brief. Example: “I was working in a customer service team where we were receiving a lot of complaints.
<b>Task</b>	Explain the task you had to complete or the goal you were working toward. Example: “My task was to

	figure out why we were getting so many complaints and improve customer satisfaction.
<b>Action</b>	Detail the actions you took to address the situation. Example: “I led a team to collect customer feedback and implemented changes based on their suggestions.
<b>Result</b>	Share the outcome of your actions, focusing on positive results. Example: “As a result, customer complaints dropped by 20% and satisfaction improved significantly.

## Asking Your Own Questions

An interview isn’t just about them asking you questions. You should also come prepared with a few questions of your own. This helps you learn if the company is a good fit for you and shows that you’re engaged in the process.

The following are some examples of types of questions you might ask:

- **Ask about the role**

*Example: What does success in this role look like in the first six months?*

- **Ask about the team or company culture**

*Example: How does the company support employee development?*

- **Clarify next steps**

*Example: What are the next steps in the interview process?*

## **Requesting Accommodations**

Accommodations are changes or adjustments made to help a person perform their best in a specific situation. If you need support, it's important to ask for it. Many companies are happy to make adjustments, and this can help you feel more comfortable.

### **Types of accommodations for interviews**

- Request interview questions in writing instead of verbally.
- Ask for visual aids or assistive technology during the interview.
- Request extra time to think about and answer questions.
- Ask for breaks if the interview is long or overwhelming.
- Ask for a quiet room for the interview to minimize distractions.
- Request to have the interview conducted in a comfortable setting.

### **How to ask for accommodations**

- Bring up your accommodation needs before scheduling the interview if possible.
- Mention it during the confirmation of the interview details.
- Use clear and direct language, like:

- “I would like to discuss accommodations for my upcoming interview.”
- “Can we arrange for a quiet space for my interview?”

### **Speaking up for yourself**

- Know your rights. Understand that you have the right to request accommodations.
- Familiarize yourself with your rights under employment laws.
- Remember that asking for accommodations is a normal part of the interview process. Be confident in your requests.
- Speak up about your needs to ensure you can perform your best.

## **Caring for Your Well-Being**

Interviews can be stressful, so it’s important to take care of your mental and physical health before, during and after the process. Check out the tips below for managing interview stress to care for your well-being. You can also check-out the Wellness dimension to learn more tips for managing your well-being.

#### **Before the interview**

**Prepare yourself:** Get a good night’s sleep, eat something nutritious, and take a few minutes to relax before heading into the interview.

**Take a deep breath:** Simple breathing exercises or light stretching can help calm nerves.

<p><b>During the interview</b></p>	<p><b>Take your time:</b> Remember, it's okay to take your time when answering questions. Pause if you need to collect your thoughts. You don't have to rush.</p> <p><b>If you don't know the answer:</b> It's perfectly fine if you don't know the answer to a question. Instead of feeling pressured, show the interviewer that you're willing to learn. You might say something like, "I'm not sure about that right now, but I'm eager to learn more and find the answer." This demonstrates your openness and a growth mindset.</p>
<p><b>After the interview</b></p>	<p><b>Celebrate what went well:</b> Were there answers you were proud of? Take a moment to acknowledge your good work.</p> <p><b>Be kind to yourself:</b> Interviews are stressful, and you did it! What can you learn from it for next time?</p>

## Make it Personal

### Get Ready for Your Interview

Preparing for an interview is crucial for success. Check out the tips below and answer the questions to build skills to effectively prepare

for an interview. Write your answers below or in a notes app or another digital format that works for you.

## Tips for Interview Success

- **Wear professional clothing:** Even for online interviews, wear workplace-appropriate clothing like a button-down shirt to show that you take the opportunity seriously.
- **Be on time:** Aim to arrive early for in-person interviews. If it's online, log in a few minutes early to check your connection.
- **Plan your route:** For in-person interviews, give yourself extra time to find the location. Familiarize yourself with the area beforehand.
- **Stay calm:** Take deep breaths and stay positive. Remember that it's normal to feel nervous.
- **Follow up:** After the interview, consider sending a thank-you email to express your appreciation for the opportunity.

### Helpful Tips for First-Time Interviewees

- **Practice makes you confident:** Take time to practice answering common interview questions with a friend or in front of a mirror.
- **Research the company:** Familiarize yourself with the company's values and mission to connect your answers to their goals.
- **Use available resources:** Access common interview questions and practice your responses.

### Helpful Tips for Experienced Interviewees

- **Reflect on past experiences:** Think about your previous interviews. What worked well? What could you improve on?
- **Practice tailoring answers:** Customize your responses to highlight your growth since your last interview.
- **Use the STAR method:** For behavioral questions, practice framing your answers using the Situation, Task, Action, and Result format to convey your experiences clearly.

**Question:** What are your main strengths, and how do they relate to the job you're applying for?



**Question:** What questions do you have about the role and company?

**Question:** What concerns do you have about the interview process, and how can you address them before the interview?

## Section 3: Navigating Post-Application Steps

Following up after an application or interview can have a big impact on your job search. It shows employers you're interested, keeps you informed on the process, and helps you feel more in control of the process.

**In this section, we'll cover:**

- Checking your application status.
- Sending thank-you notes.
- Handling rejection and celebrating wins.
- Accepting a job offer.

By the end of this section, you will have a better understanding of how to build relationships with potential employers, how to highlight your professionalism through thoughtful follow-up tasks, and how to be prepared to handle rejection and success.

### Engage and Explore

#### Post-Application Steps

After you've sent out job applications or completed interviews, knowing what to do next is important. Here are some key steps to help you navigate this part of the job search process.

## Step 1: Send a thank-you emails after an interview

After an interview, sending a thank-you email is a great way to leave a positive impression. This shows appreciation for their time and reinforces your interest in the position. Here's how to craft a thank-you email:

- **Be prompt:** Send it within 24 hours of the interview.
- **Personalize it:** Mention something specific from the interview to remind them of your conversation.
- **Keep it brief:** Thank them again and express your enthusiasm for the role.

## Step 2: Check your application status

It's good practice to check the status of your application after a week or two of submitting. This shows your interest in the position. You can reach out to the hiring manager or recruiter politely to ask for any updates. Here's a simple way to do it:

- **Send a short email:** Ask if there's any update on your application status.

## Celebrating Success and Handling Rejection

The job search process comes with highs and lows, and preparing for both is important. Here's some strategies to approach moments of success and rejection with a positive mindset:

- **Strategies for celebrating successes**  
Landing an interview or receiving a job offer is an important achievement!

- **Celebrate your hard work:** Whether it's a job offer or just a step forward in the interview process, take a moment to recognize your efforts and celebrate.
- **Build your confidence:** Every win, no matter the size, brings you closer to your career goals.
- **Strategies for handling rejection**

Receiving a rejection can be tough, but it's a normal part of the job search. Here's how to handle it positively:

  - **Don't take it personally:** Hiring decisions can depend on many things that aren't about you.
  - **Ask for feedback:** Respond to the email with a request for feedback on your interview or application. This can help you improve for the future.
  - **Stay positive:** Use this as a learning experience and apply for other positions.

## Accepting or Negotiating a Job Offer

When you receive a job offer, it's essential to thoroughly review the details before making your decision. These include the start date, offered salary and benefits (which are perks or compensation that are in addition to your salary). For example, benefits can include a health insurance plan and paid time off. Evaluating everything will help you confidently manage job offers and choose what's best for you.

Here are two options to consider:

- **Option 1: Accepting the offer**

If you're happy with what's being offered, including like the salary, benefits, and job responsibilities, reply as soon as you can to accept.

- *Example: You could say something like, "Thank you for the offer. I'm excited to join the team and look forward to starting." Remember to show appreciation for the opportunity.*

- **Option 2: Negotiating the offer**

If the offer doesn't fully meet your expectations, don't hesitate to ask for adjustments. Be polite and back up your request with solid information. If they don't agree to your request, that's okay. You did what was within your control by asking and speaking up for yourself.

- *Example: If the salary seems low, you could say, "Thank you for the offer. I was hoping we could discuss the salary, as my research shows that similar roles in this area typically pay more. Based on my qualifications and skills, I believe an adjustment would be fair."*

## Make it Personal

### Post-Application Scenarios

Now that you've learned about the steps to take after applying for a job, let's look at some real-life examples.

## Reflect on the Scenarios

In this activity, you will explore three different scenarios about what to do after applying for jobs. Read the scenario and think about what you would do.

Then write down what you think would happen, based on the actions you think you would take. Write your answers below or in a notes app or another digital format that works for you.

If you need help check out the example answers at the end of the section.

### Scenario 1

You recently applied for a marketing assistant position at a local company and are eager to hear back. However, it's been a week, and you haven't received any updates.

**Question:** What would you do?

**Question:** What do you think would happen?

### **Scenario 2**

You receive an email informing you that you weren't selected for the job after completing an interview.

**Question:** What would you do?

**Question:** What do you think would happen?

### **Scenario 3**

You receive a job offer, but the salary is lower than you expected.

**Question:** What would you do?



**Question:** What do you think would happen?

## Reflect and Connect

Great work! We've covered a lot in this module including:

- Steps to apply for a job.
- Strategies to prepare for and complete an interview.
- What to do after applying for a job.

Take a moment to think about the questions below and how they relate to your experiences. Write your answers below or in a notes app or another digital format that works for you. Think of this as a reflective journal for yourself, which you can refer to later.

Happy reflecting!

**What strategies can you use to identify key skills in a job posting that match your experience?**

**What methods can you use to tailor your resume and cover letter for specific job postings?**

**What steps do you take to prepare for an interview? What strategies help you stay calm?**

**What are some strategies you can use to apply interview feedback to improve?**

- *Suggestion: You could keep your interview feedback in a document to review and you could ask a friend or family member to help you practice to apply the feedback.*

**After applying for a job or completing an interview, how can you follow up?**

**How can you celebrate small successes while applying for jobs or completing interviews?**

- *Suggestion: To keep you motivated you can plan some small rewards after each stage of searching, applying, and interviewing.*

## Post Application Scenario Example Answers

### Scenario 1

- **What you could do:** You decide to send a polite follow-up email to the hiring manager, thanking them for considering your application and asking for updates. You might write, "I hope you're well. I wanted to follow up on my application for the marketing assistant position I submitted last week. I'm excited about the opportunity to join your team and would appreciate any updates on the hiring process."
- **What might happen:** Your follow-up demonstrates your enthusiasm for the position. The hiring manager responds with a timeline for the next steps in the hiring process and appreciates your interest, keeping you informed and engaged.

### Scenario 2

- **What you could do:** Instead of feeling discouraged, you remind yourself that rejection is a natural part of the job search process. You reflect on the positive aspects – like how the interview helped you practice and gain confidence. You also take note of any feedback you received to improve for future opportunities.
- **What might happen:** By staying positive and not taking the rejection personally, you keep yourself motivated. You understand that there are more opportunities out there, and each interview is a step closer to finding the right job.

With this mindset, you continue your job search with fresh energy.

### Scenario 3

- **What you could do:** Instead of accepting the offer immediately, you decide to negotiate. You research average salaries for that role in your area and prepare to explain your qualifications. You then respond to the employer, thanking them for the offer and politely asking if the salary is negotiable.
- **What might happen:** Even if the salary doesn't increase, you spoke up and addressed your concern. This way, you're not left wondering, and you've taken a step toward understanding your value.

# Keep Going

There is so much more to learn! Access the full CanWork BC content and learn more about the program at **[canworkbc.ca](https://canworkbc.ca)**.

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BRITISH  
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